

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 01570 041324Z

42

ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-04 ISO-00 PASS-00 /005 W

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R 041200Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4640

UNCLAS KINGSTON 1570

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, JM (RICHARDSON, JOHN CRAIG)

SUBJECT: W/W JOHN CRAIG RICHARDSON

REF: KINGSTON 1536; FAGAN/BARLOW TELCON

FOR MR. JOHN RICHARDSON

1217 CHURCH STREET

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

WE ARE SINCERELY SORRY TO HAVE TO INFORM YOU THAT IT APPEARS THAT YOUR SON, JOHN CRAIG RICHARSON, HAS SUFFERED A TRAGIC AND FATAL ACCIDENT. ON APRIL 22, 1974, THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY AT KINGSTON, JAMAICA, WAS INFORMED BY JAMAICAN POLICE AND IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES FROM THE TOWN OF SAVANNAH-LA-MAR, THAT YOUR SON HAD BEEN REPORTED MISSING BY THE PROPRIETOR OF WHITE BIRD COTTAGE WHERE HE HAD BEEN STAYING. THE HOTEL IS IN THE NEGRIL AREA ON THE WESTERLY END OF JAMAICA. IT APPEARS THAT HE DEPARTED THE HOTEL ABOUT 1:00PM ON APRIL 19 WITH THE INTENT TO SCUBA DIVE AND FISH FOR CONCH. IT IS REPORTED THAT HE HAD BEEN ADVISED NOT TO GO OUT ALONE, BUT HE APPARENTLY DISREGARDED THIS ADVICE, AND PROCEEDED TO EMBARK ON A RUBBER RAFT IN AN AREA KNOWN AS THE "WEST END AREA" OFF NEGRIL. WHEN THE EMBASSY RECEIVED THE MESSAGE ON THE 22ND OF APRIL, JOHN HAD BEEN MISSING SOME 72 HOURS.

THE IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL, WHO INFORMED THE EMBASSY, STATED THAT THE POLICE, IN THREE POWER BOATS, HAD COMBED THE AREA REPEATEDLY FOR SEVERAL DAYS FOR SOME SIGN OF YOUR SON, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 KINGST 01570 041324Z

UNFORTUNATELY, IT IS KNOWN THAT THE SHORELINE IN THAT AREA

IS CLIFF-LIKE, RATHER THAN SAND BED, AND THE UNDERSEA ISLAND SHELF DROPS OFF SOMEWHAT PRECIPITOUSLY NEAR SHORE; IT IS ALSO KNOWN THAT BECAUSE OF THIS DEEP WATER RELATIVELY NEAR SHORE THE AREA IS CONSIDERED TO BE SHARK-INFESTED. IT IS CONJECTURED THAT EITHER THROUGH ACCIDENTAL DROWNING OR ATTACK BY SHARKS, YOUR SON JOHN HAS MET HIS DEATH, SINCE, AS OF THIS DATE, THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGN OF HIM, NOR RECOVERY OF HIS BODY. THE RUBBER RAFT WHICH WAS NOT LOCATED FOR SOME TIME, WAS EVENTUALLY LOCATED NEAR THE SHORE

A MEMBER OF THE EMBASSY STAFF SPOKE WITH A MR. STEVE LIBERA ON APRIL 29, .MR. LIBERA HAD APPARENTLY KNOWN YOUR SON AND ACCOMPANIED HIM TO FLORIDA BY AUTOMOBILE AND LATER TO JAMAICA. HE STATED HE HAD TAKEN POSSESSION OF JOHN'S EFFECTS AND WAS TAKING THEM TO FLORIDA, TO YOUR SON ANDREW AT FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.

AS OF THE WRITING OF THIS MESSAGE, THERE APPEARS NO HOPE FOR THE RETURN OF YOUR SON. THEREFORE, YOU SHOULD BE ADVISED OF THE LEGAL PROCEDURES IN MATTERS SUCH AS THIS. AFTER THE POLICE COMPLETE THEIR INVESTIGATION, THEY WILL REFER THE MATTER TO LOCAL CORONER, WHO WILL EMPANEL A JURY FOR AN INQUEST. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS NO EXPECTATION, BASED ON PAST EXPERIENCE, THAT SUCH A JURY WOULD BE EMPANELLED IN THE NEAR FUTURE; DELAYS OF A YEAR OR MORE ARE NOT UNCOMMON. THEREFORE, YOU WILL NOT BE RECEIVING A JAMAICAN DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR SOME TIME. IF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND THE EMBASSY ARE SATISFIED THAT THERE IS, IN FACT, NO HOPE FOR THE REAPPEARANCE OF YOUR SON, WE CAN PREPARE A REPORT SHOWING THE PRESUMPTIVE DEATH OF A UNITED STATES CITIZEN ABROAD. IN THE CONNECTION, WE WILL NEED EVIDENCE OF JOHN'S CITIZENSHIP IN THE FORM OF A CERTIFIED COPY OF HIS BIRTH CERTIFICATE OR EVIDENCE THAT HE HAD EVER BEEN ISSUED A UNITED STATES PASSPORT.

AGAIN, PLEASE ACCEPT OUR CONDOLENCES.

DIRECTOR, SPECIAL CONSULAR SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON, DC.C. HEWITT

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PAGE 03 KINGST 01570 041324Z

NOTE BY OC/T: KINGSTON 1570 PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

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